

THE CHURCH'S YOUTH DEPARTMENT: A BIBLICAL MODEL

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“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:3-5).

The following is excerpted from the book *The Fall and Rise of Christian Standards* by David Kidd (Xulonpress.com or 866-909-2665):

This passage lists a number of characteristics which Paul instructed Titus to have the older women of the church teach the younger women. The purpose of this instruction is stated at the end of verse 5, ‘... that the Word of God be not blasphemed.’ Therefore, each of these characteristics is either accepted and implemented for the glory of god, or rejected and minimized at the risk of bring reproach upon the name of Christ. ...

The Greek word for discreet is ‘sophron’ and is rich in meaning. Most significant is the idea of voluntary limitation of ones freedom. You may recall that this is similar to ‘modest’ in 1 Timothy 2:9. Additionally, ‘sophron’ means ‘demonstrating self-government with proper restraint on all the passion and desires’ (The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, Baker Book House, 1984, p. 1732). The word ‘chaste’ comes from a Greek word also meaning modest as well as innocent.

Immediately, we see in these two words a glaring difference between the demeanor of women whose conduct is ‘as becometh holiness,’ and young women who adopt cultural fads at the expense of the appearance of virtue and purity. Modest, chaste appearance is not in vogue these days. These gems are thoughtlessly traded away for the cheap and demeaning garments of current fashion. The tragic consequence is that innocence is often shed as early in life as possible. This priceless inheritance is squandered in the pig sty of cultural popularity. ...

It is imperative to understanding the precise directive in this passage to acknowledge that the qualities of discretion and chastity are to be fostered in Christian ‘young women.’ This is not a suggestion, but a command. Furthermore, this mentoring is to take place within the church family. Such deportment is rapidly becoming extinct in the passion-driven culture which has swallowed up the vast majority of our youth. ...

Pastors bear a large share of the responsibility if they lack courage and conviction to proclaim the whole counsel of God to the sheep they are charged to nurture. Christian parents, also weakened by the relentless pressures of a society drunk with the liquor of licentiousness, have sacrificed chastity as a priority for their daughter's appearance, while desperately hoping that somehow she will retain it in her heart. Solomon describes this malady in Proverbs 11:22, 'As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion.'

The solution to the decay of these priceless qualities in young ladies is offered in a very simple church program to supplement the teaching of the Christian home. The older godly women are to teach the younger women principles of conduct befitting a Christian lady. This does not require a flamboyant youth leader or a time-consuming addition to the church's already overcrowded schedule. Titus 2:3-5 can be fulfilled first by example, then by casual and homey discussions as ladies assume their God-given directive to mentor younger women. Quite simply, it is to be a natural outgrowth of the church family's care for one another.

Instead of a biblical model however, the church has opted for a secular one in which youth are portioned off into age-based groups, generally led by a young man, and provided with an entertainment-oriented method of instruction. This produces three undesirable outcomes:

- (1) By grouping those who lack spiritual maturity together, an environment of immaturity is created, working against the very goals Titus 2 establishes.
- (2) Youth are isolated from the very ones scripture says are to be their models and mentors.
- (3) The spiritually mature are denied access to those whom they are scripturally admonished to teach, by the very structure of church programs which are supposed to be facilitating that same biblical instruction!

This is not to imply that there are no positive outcomes, but that the process we are following is not conducive to the results scripture says we are to seek. Age-based grouping does not originate from biblical patterns but from secular, educational psychology. That fact alone does not make it wrong, but where it conflicts with what we find in scripture, we who profess to follow scripture should do so, regardless of what the 'experts' say.

While much of the emphasis regarding dress, appearance and conduct has been upon girls, young men are also admonished in the same chapter. 'Young men likewise exhort to be soberminded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that

he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.' The word 'soberminded' comes from the same Greek word as discreet, 'sophron.'

Thus, we conclude that in all matters of outward testimony reflecting heart condition, both young men and young ladies are to be instructed and mentored by the spiritually mature in characteristics of behavior which establish them in stark contrast to the foolish and trendy antics of an unregenerate culture.

There is a monumental reason for this, 'that the Word of God be not blasphemed.'

A return to biblically-based standards of modesty, decency and propriety, along with the methods to achieve them, are a life or death priority for the 21st century church and family. We must nurture and protect the virtues of innocence and purity, in ourselves and our children, lest we lose their hearts to a culture which is eager to fatten itself on their spiritually decaying remains. If we do not individually and corporately oppose these gradual carnal advances and return to the biblical model, how long before the feast begins? God forbid, has it started already?

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